

'Whatever can it be?' asked Katie.

Just then, as if in answer to her question, the children thought they heard something in the howling wind.

*'Det er min. Jeg skal brug de til min rejse.'*

Gary shook his head and listened again. Slowly the sounds became clearer. It was a voice, getting louder and louder.

*'Det er min. That's mine. Jeg skal brug de til min rejse. I shall need it for my journey.'*

The children huddled together. They looked round, but there was no one there.

'I need it for my journey,' the voice called again.

'Who's that?' whispered Joshua, wishing he'd remembered to go to the bathroom before they came out.

'I don't know,' Katie hissed back.

Now Joshua really did need to go to the loo. His big sister, Katie, normally knew everything but she didn't know what the stone was and now she didn't know who was speaking either.

Gary looked around at the white cliff-face of the bay that circled round beyond them. Although he had been to the beach a hundred

times he noticed for the first time what looked like the entrance to a small cave.

'I think the voice is coming from that cave,' said Gary, pointing.

Joshua had started hopping from one foot to the other. 'Why don't we just go home for a while,' he mumbled, 'and come back some other day? I need to go—'

'Oh, come on,' interrupted Gary.

The children made their way up to the sandy shore. Gary, who was enjoying being in charge for a change, had forgotten to step carefully so as not to mess up his trainers. Joshua shifted nervously from foot to foot, now desperate to pee, while Katie wished she wasn't twelve and the oldest and could run home. As they drew near, the cave entrance looked dark and forbidding. Joshua began shaking. He'd heard that dragons liked to live in dark caves. Now even Gary stopped in his tracks. He had been as brave as he could, but he had also just remembered reading something about smugglers with guns hiding in caves.

'Who's there?' he called out softly, so as not to wake anything that might be hiding inside.